

The Hague, 27 November 2005

**FOURTH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES
to meet at the World Forum Convention Centre, The Hague
28 November to 3 December 2005**

The fourth session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court will open in the World Forum Convention Centre in The Hague, on Monday, 28 November 2005, at 10.00 hours.

The incoming President of the Assembly, H.E. Mr Bruno Stagno Ugarte, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations in New York, who takes over from H.R.H. Prince Zeid Ráad Zeid Al-Husseini Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations, will open the session.

The Assembly will be addressed by the President of the Court, Judge Philippe Kirsch, by the Prosecutor of the Court, Mr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo, and by the Registrar, Mr Bruno Cathala. Statements will be made by Madame Minister Simone Veil, Chair and focal point of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims, and by Mr. Edmond Wellenstein, Director of the International Criminal Court Task Force, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, on behalf of the host State.

Role of the Assembly of States Parties

The Assembly of States Parties is the management oversight and legislative body of the International Criminal Court. It is composed of representatives of the States that have ratified or acceded to the Rome Statute, currently numbering 99. The Assembly elects a Bureau, consisting of a President, two Vice Presidents and 18 members, for a three-year term, taking into consideration principles of equitable geographic distribution.

The provisional agenda for the fourth session, contained in document ICC-ASP/4/18, includes, inter alia, consideration of the proposed budget for the Court for 2006, regulations of the Victims Trust Fund, the code of professional conduct for counsel, permanent premises of the Court, and the crime of aggression.

At this session, the Assembly shall elect the Bureau, including its two Vice Presidents. During the last session, the Assembly decided that the future composition of the Bureau would comprise five seats each for the Group of Western European and Other States and for the Group of African States; four seats each for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of Eastern European States; and three seats for the Group of Asian States.

The Assembly will appoint a Credentials Committee consisting of representatives of nine States Parties. The Committee is currently composed of representatives from: Benin, Fiji, France, Honduras, Ireland, Paraguay, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia and Uganda.

Six Working Groups will meet during the session as follows:

- The Working Group on the proposed Programme Budget, which will consider the budget for the Court for 2006, and matters which have financial implications, such as the pension scheme for judges, the conditions of service and compensation of the Prosecutor and Deputy Prosecutors and the New York Liaison Office.
- The Working Group for the Trust Fund for Victims which will, inter alia, discuss the regulations for the Trust Fund for Victims;
- The Working Group on Permanent Premises of the Court;
- The Working Group for the Draft Code of Professional Conduct for Counsel;
- The Special Working Group on the Crime of Aggression;
- The Working Group for the New York Liaison Office, which will discuss the feasibility of establishing a representation common to all parts of the Court at United Nations headquarters.

Furthermore, the Bureau will report to the Assembly on its activities since the last session and make appropriate recommendations. There will also be a report on the activities of the Court; a report by the Chairperson of the Committee on Budget and Finance, Mr. Karl Paschke (Germany); and a report by the ICC External Auditor.

In accordance with rule 5 of the Rules and Procedure, the Assembly will decide on the date and venue of the next session of the Assembly. The Assembly will also discuss the date and venue of the next session of the Committee on Budget and Finance.

State Parties

The following states are parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court: Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mongolia, Namibia, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zambia.

Observatory signatory States

Pursuant to article 122, paragraph 1, of the Rome Statute, States that are not parties to the Statute but have signed either the Statute or the Final Act of the Rome Conference may be observers in the Assembly. Observer States are allowed to participate in the deliberations of the Assembly, but may not participate in the taking of decisions. The following States have been invited in an observer capacity: Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czech Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea,

Ethiopia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Holy See, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

States that are not parties to the Rome Statute

States that are not parties to the Rome Statute and that have not signed the Final Act or the Statute do not have observer status. Rule 94 of the Rules of Procedure provides that, at the beginning of each session of the Assembly, the President may, subject to the approval of the Assembly, invite those States to be present during the work of the Assembly (Bhutan, Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Grenada, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Maldives, Mauritania, Micronesia (Federated States of), Myanmar, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Somalia, Suriname, Swaziland, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu).

International organizations and non-governmental organizations have been invited to participate in the Assembly as observers.